585 couple then put on wreaths called sammandha mālai, or wreaths establishing relationship, and the wrist threads are tied on. The bride's sister brings some rice and milk in a cup, into which the linked fingers of the bride and bridegroom are thrust. Taking up some of the rice, they put it into each other's mouths three times. After they have washed their hands, the maternal uncle or priest asks them if they have seen Aranjoti (the pole-star), and they reply in the affirmative. On the third day, presents are given to the newly-married couple, and the wrist threads are removed. Going to a stream, they perform a mimic ceremony of sowing, and scatter cotton and rice seed in two small pans made by a Toreya with
587 cow-dung. Widow remarriage is permitted among the Udayas, and a widow may marry a cousin, but not her
585 dead husband's brother. At the marriage ceremony, a priest makes a mark with sacred ashes on the foreheads of the contracting couple, and announces the fact of their union.

428 It is noted by Dr. Rivers that "Breeks has stated that the Toda custom is that the house shall pass to the youngest son. It seems quite clear that this is wrong, and that this custom is absolutely unknown among the Todas. It is, however, a Badaga custom, and among them I was told that it is due to the fact that, as the sons of a family grow up and marry, they leave the
(593) house of the parents and build houses elsewhere. It is
(888) the duty of the youngest son to dwell with his parents, and support them as long as they live, and, when they die, he continues to live in the paternal home, of which he becomes the owner."

843 A ceremony is performed in the seventh month of a
(585) woman's first pregnancy, which is important, inasmuch
(586) as it seals the marriage contract, and, after its perform-

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

9 THE ADVENT OF DEATH

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"Even if one lives a thousand years, death won't pass him by."
(Proverb)

Old Age

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9.1. The word *kaṭṭe*, "dried log," is applied to a very old person, who is thought to be dry and unlikely to live long. If close to a hundred he is thought to be good for nothing and probably dim-witted he is then called *koraḍu*, "dead-plant steam." The Badagas have a proverb which asserts: "A man above sixty years is said to have half-sense". Furthermore, "At the time of getting spoiled one has no [use of his] brain; at the time of dying one has no sense." Difficulties that the elderly have in accomplishing anything are also referred to thus: "It is like teaching an old lady to cough like her great-grandchildren." Similarly: "The activity of a twenty year-old is pleasure-loveing; the activity of an eighty year-old is that of old age." While an old person is usually shown outward respect, younger people tend not to heed his advice and opinions too closely. This too is reflected in proverbs: "If a person cannot see, hear or walk, as he is such an old man, you must first ask his permission to do anything." And again, "If the lord speaks the whole village quakes; if an old man speaks there is a sound of babbling." He is indeed expected to be the first to perform a wide range of ritual acts, from touching the earring during a child's ear-piercing ceremony to pouring a handful of grain on a corpse. Some other proverbs also speak dispara-

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

gingly of the elderly: "After becoming aged one's greed increases;" more sarcastic ones on the same theme are these: "As greed increases, the lifetime lessens," "As mist catches onto a peak, so her vilest characteristics catch hold of an old woman," and again, "Is it medicine for old age, like advice for a bad time?" This latter one refers to the belief that there is no further need for medicine when a person is old, just as a bad man is beyond need of advice. (The general world for all kinds of medicine, *maddu*, is used in this last proverb; it also means "magical potion," "opium" and "poison," however).

9.2. The general attitude towards adult women is not a charitable one: it is succinctly summed up in the saying, "The man knows the nature of others; his wife is an expert in cooking." In contrast to this, though, the status of women is never higher than in old age, and in a few cases old ladies have been members of the otherwise all-male village councils. The Lingayat Badagas in fact treat a post-menopausal woman as a man; but most Badagas do not, for if orthodox they still prohibit an old woman from eating or drinking in the inner and most sacred parts of the house. No ceremonies mark the occurrence of menopause; but Lingayat women are often given a *Linga* symbol to wear after it has occurred.

9.3. Older people have friends in their own village, but not elsewhere because of the difficulty they have in getting around. They select friends of equal age, and hence similar memories; but whether or not the friends are equally well-to-do seems unimportant. A pair of widows or else a pair of widowers are commonly good friends; and provided they are very old, even a widow and a widower can be close friends, treating each other as fictive brother and sister, without other villagers misinterpreting the relationship. Again, if they are extremely elderly, two men and their two wives may treat each other as *four* brothers. Then there is nothing scandalous about an old man sitting with the wife of his friend and talking to her for hours. In contrast with this, an old man with a young wife will not be particularly friendly with another old man whose wife is elderly.

9.4. It is believed that if a man wears gold his lifetime will lengthen. If on the other hand he sees two crows in the act of sexual congress, he will die within a year. An elderly man receives this information calmly; but a younger man will try to avoid his fate by counteracting the omen. This is done by going to a hill above a neighbouring hamlet, and shouting out to the villagers that he—mentioning himself by name—is dead. As he is careful that no one

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

121 taste, smell, or most commonly sight to be *like* the illness effects:
75 "An invisible force is dealt with visibly by means that are meant and understood to be symbolic" (Ackerknecht 1942).

10.20. The job of the therapist is to bring about, by such culturally appropriate means, the apparent termination of a condition in the sick person which either does prevent him or is potentially going to prevent him from fulfilling all his roles in Badaga society. His disablement may be permanent or quite temporary, but he or his relatives will seek help in ending it. The general status of a sick person in this society (as in any other) is made clearer by considering Talcott Parsons' useful definition of the sick as people unable to perform certain tasks or certain role behaviour. Sickness is thus different from other types of deviance because it is a status that can be legitimized if the person recognizes he is ill, wants to get well, and seeks help from the appropriate mediator in his society when a cure does not come spontaneously by the action of his body defences (Parsons 1951: 428-47).

121 There is a possibility with older patients, on the other hand, that
888 "sickness episodes may also contribute to the orderliness of social
75 life, since they are a useful vehicle for communicating and legiti-
182 mizing changes in how social relations are distributed within a community" (Young 1976: 12). Being chronically sick can be a face-saving way of relinquishing roles one is no longer able to fulfil adequately. The many proverbs cited in the preceding chapter (9.1-9.6) indicate the clear recognition in Badaga culture that old age brings the personality into a different, "half-dried log" condition. Consequently there is less concern with healing the sick elders, and less differentiation recognized between a state of illness and one of old age. The elderly are obliged to accept the change and the curtailment of several roles, and chronic illness is in some cases an adequate means of giving them up while adopting a new and simpler role, one that entails fewer obligations.

121 In such a process of reorientation,
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> Sickness episodes are able to communicate complex models in a readily recognizable way. Etiologies cast a broad net, implicating objects, qualities, and events in every aspect of life; they sort out these diverse kinds of fact, combine them into relationships that cannot be articulated in everyday contexts,

632 (615) When a festival has to be organized that only concerns perhaps one of the phratries resident in a "village", the relevant hamlets call together their own multi-hamlet committee to handle the matter without calling upon the "village" headman to organize the celebration. It is only for festivals that concern nearly all of the hamlets that he will take charge of the organization. No festivals are celebrated 619 796 jointly by a division, or by the whole Nilgiri population, largely because the distances to be traveled are too great and the number of participants would be unmanageably large. Funerals are always treated as public ceremonies, and weddings quite 796 often are. Other life-cycle ceremonies can be treated as public ones, but very (621) rarely are. In any case, when a life-cycle ceremony is treated as a public celebration, it is only celebrated in the hamlet of the people most closely concerned. Personal ceremonies are not celebrated at the "village" or any higher level. (This does not of course preclude inviting visitors from other "villagers" or divisions.)

623 (622) The headman does not make the arrangements for these various celebrations of his own accord. His hamlet generally has a council for settling disputes, and also a festival committee consisting of the priests and a few elderly men. The latter not only organize festivals, but occasionally may plan to build a new temple or propitiate an uncooperative deity. (Arrangements for life-cycle ceremonies, unlike public festivals, are mainly in the hands of the family concerned.) The elders on the hamlet council are generally different individuals than those on the (428) festival committee; this is a convenient division of the labor involved. But in either (562) case the positions are quite often hereditary, and are never held by women. The (888) elders are typically the older males of all lineages represented in a hamlet; it is they who are in the best position to enforce council decisions among all of their

623 lineage-kin.

(888)

The hamlet council, together with the hamlet headman, is at the lowest

(631) stage in a hierarchy of traditional councils and headmen. Some examples of how these councils work will be given when we discuss the changes they have been subjected to during the present century. We will now explain the working of the hamlet council, however, in broad outline.

Any villager with a dispute must take the matter to his own hamlet headman

692 first, for the consideration of the hamlet council. If the defendant is from another

(622) hamlet, the plaintiff's headman will approach the headman of the other hamlet and

(623) they will arrange a joint council. If one party becomes dissatisfied with the manner

(628) in which the hamlet council has handled the case, or if the hamlet council has been

(632) unable to reach a decision, the case can be passed on to the level of the "village"

692 council. As soon as the "village" headman hears about it, his first task is to

692 enquire whether the case has already been heard by the hamlet council; for, as with the official Indian legal system, no case can come before a higher court before it has passed through the lower-level court. The "village" headman calls together a council consisting of all the hamlet headmen of his "village", as well as various assistants to these headmen and perhaps a few other respected elders. This group

692 constitutes the council at the "village" level. In the same way, the divisional headman can call together a council of all the "village" headmen in his division, or the President of the Nilgiris can call a meeting of all the "village" headmen of all four divisions.

These last two steps are only taken on very rare occasions, especially in the present century, to settle factional disputes which have reached serious proportions without being resolved. The last such meeting was in June, 1957 (Dharma-